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REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

Man's Place in the Cosmos, and Other Essays. By ANDREW SETH, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh and London, William Blackwood & Sons, 1897. — pp. viii, 308.

The reader who wishes intelligently to appreciate this interesting and instructive book must never lose out of sight its avowed character and intent. It is a collection of polemical essays on several different subjects, which have previously been published in Reviews, and which are here collected and “republished without substantial alteration.” They have been subjected, however, to a certain amount of revision and to the insertion of a “few passages which had been omitted” in their previous publication. These facts, of course, influence the style of treatment given to the different topics, both as respects method and as respects language; and they also forbid the unity and positiveness in declaration of the author’s views which are required of the more constructive treatises on psychology and philosophy. The book is not, indeed, lacking in a certain kind of unity. For, as the author explains in the preface, these essays “are all, at bottom, treatments of the same theme”; and what this theme is, the title of the book is chosen to indicate,—namely, ‘man’s place in the cosmos.’ Expressed more in detail, Professor Seth here subjects to critical examination from his own philosophical standpoint the views of several writers whose work was at the time matter of deep and widespread interest, respecting the relations of humanity—the individual and the race—to the forces of so-called Nature, and to the Absolute Ground of things, or to God. Nor does his polemical handling of others prevent him from expressing his own views,—partly in the way of sympathy with what he considers true, and oftener in the correction of what seems to him defective or untrue.

The essays contained in this volume are the following: “Man’s Place in the Cosmos,” which takes for its theme Professor Huxley’s Romanes Lecture on “Evolution and Ethics”; “The Present Position of the Philosophical Sciences,”—the author’s Inaugural Lecture on assuming the duties of the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, Oct. 26, 1891; “The New Psychology and Automatism,” which is an address to the Edinburgh Philosophi-

cal Society, and is chiefly directed against Professor Münsterberg's theory of the will; "A New Theory of the Absolute," in which Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* is subjected to a thorough criticism; and "Mr. Balfour and his Critics." These different essays necessarily vary considerably in interest and in permanent value. Among them the criticism of Mr. Bradley is much the most fruitful for the serious student of philosophy; while the essay on Mr. Balfour is perhaps most entertaining for the more general reader. In truth, the three essays preceding these two deal with views which were particularly in the flux at the time when the essays were written; and although we cannot assume to answer for any of the psychologists whom Professor Seth takes in hand, we are of the impression that the present opinions of some of them are turning more in the direction of his own.

We particularly commend, as worthy of admiration and of imitation, the author's way in polemics. One might justly call himself favored to have a critic of such attainments and temper. Professor Seth indulges in no misrepresentation or travesty of the views of those whom he opposes; neither does he expose himself to the suspicion of bitterness or of willingness to make capital for himself, whether for superior insight or for orthodoxy of opinion. The positions which are criticised are fairly and sympathetically stated, and with sufficient fulness to guard against their being misunderstood. The controversy is courteous and knightly, — a fine example of how this sort of thing ought to be done. Yet there is keenness to the edge of the critic's sword; and passages at arms where there are brilliant flashes of wit and sarcasm are not wanting. The absence of that most irritating of all critical faults — flippancy — is noteworthy. Altogether this seems to us one of the most praiseworthy specimens of polemical essay-writing which have appeared of late.

No attempt is made by Professor Seth to conceal, or even to keep in the shadow, his own philosophical standpoints; although the nature of the book would make the detailed exposition and defence of these standpoints out of place. His epistemological views are critical and negative of the agnosticism, as to the truth of ethics and religion, prevailing in most of the views of the writers with whom he deals. And the amount of assent and of dissent which he accords to Mr. Balfour's positions indicates that, while he sympathizes with the latter in his defence of the ethico-religious realm against the attacks of physical science, he does not approve of the apparent schism between feeling and ratiocination, or between faith and reason, which the latter delights

to emphasize, or even to create. So acute is this sympathy that Professor Seth is led to bring out clearly what the other critics of Mr. Balfour had too much overlooked, namely, that "the appeal of the volume (*Foundations of Belief*) is not from truth to authority, but from a partial to a fuller truth, from man conceived as mere abstract intellect to human nature as a whole." In this summary of Mr. Balfour's position, more than justice may have been done to him; we are inclined to think that this is so. But his gracious treatment of the author he is criticising enables us to see clearly what the critic's own epistemological standpoint is.

We cannot quite agree to Professor Seth's comparison of Mr. Balfour's method and conclusions with the method and results of Kant, or with his interpretation of the intent and outcome of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. But to emphasize any such failure to agree would call attention away from the author's main intent and its remarkably successful accomplishment.

In the essay on "Mr. Balfour and his Critics," as well as in the essay entitled "A New Theory of the Absolute," Professor Seth shows that his own way of looking at the world of things and of souls regards it as ethical and spiritual to the core. Those views which regard the *Cosmos* (how great the misnomer!) as either a closed system of mechanical forces, blind and unmeaning from the point of view of teleology, or as abstract and well-nigh contentless Identity of subject and object, of the One and All, are alike unsatisfactory to him. The three relatively short essays, in which he criticises certain answers to subordinate problems given by the advocates of the former of these opposed views, have more of local coloring, so to speak. They are admirable specimens of the academic teacher taking a position, at once conservative and genial, towards rather foreign opinions on matters of quasi-practical as well as scientific interest, which appear on their way to invade the university circle. In them we see the somewhat crude and initial claims of the 'new psychology,' and of the 'naturalistic ethics' held up before the intelligent public, and required to give some further and more satisfactory account of themselves. The value of the essays, like whatever merit of attracting any attention which these claims themselves have, is, therefore, the more local and temporary. But in the long essay on Mr. Bradley's book (*Appearance and Reality*), Professor Seth offers to his readers discourse of a kind to help in the appreciation of what is eternal and unchanging in human cognition and human opinion. The form of saying the thing, the character of illustrating and enforcing

it, varies from age to age; the truth, the thing itself, is the summing up of the results of all our insights and of all our reflective thinking. In this essay, then, we think that the author has done not only a fine piece of critical work, but has made a positive contribution to philosophical literature.

A mere review of the criticism which the author makes of Mr. Bradley's speculative method and conclusions cannot properly take up, for criticism in detail, his disclosure of his own positive tenets in metaphysical philosophy. What Professor Seth has to say about his own agnosticism touching "the Absolute, as such," seems to us not quite clear (p. 215). We are fortunately forbidden, however, to understand this agnosticism as jeopardizing the foundations of cognition in matters of ethics and religion, and thus throwing us back either upon faith and feeling, after the Neo-Kantian fashion, or upon the vain attempt to construct a speculative theory of Reality, which shall stand the assaults of criticism, out of materials already rejected, as unworthy to serve for foundation stones of the structure of truth, by our own critical processes. Evidently Professor Seth holds views regarding the nature of Reality, as well as regarding the validity of cognition, which are intended to harmonize the whole of human experience, — scientific as well as ethico-religious, ratiocinative as well as emotional and practical. We shall await, with interest and well-founded expectations, the further development and exposition of these views. Meantime, both the special student of philosophy and the intelligent general reader who takes an interest in current philosophical discussions as bearing upon matters of ethics and religion, will find Professor Seth's book a delightful and improving companion.

GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD.

Analytic Psychology. By G. F. STOUT. In two volumes. London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York, The Macmillan Co., 1896. — pp. xv, 289, 314.

In giving us the substantial and valuable contribution to psychological literature which these volumes contain, Mr. Stout has achieved a result which is daily becoming more difficult and more worthy of praise. Even those who most distrust the method he employs will readily admit the vigor and skill with which his task has in the main been carried out. Entertaining the work can scarcely be called — at least, in the more frivolous sense of the word. In sober and strenu-